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"WHERE QUALITY
IS A LIFESTYLE"

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PRESS RELEASE

October is Fire Prevention Month, Change your Clock and Change your Batteries

October is Fire Prevention Month and the Fayette County Department of Fire and Emergency Services is busy with fire prevention efforts in our community. Firefighters are in our schools, businesses and other areas of the community to bring awareness about the dangers of fire and to educate the community about fire prevention.

Most importantly, the Department would like to remind all citizens that Daylight Savings Time ends on November 1. As you change your clocks back, please take the time to change the batteries in your smoke alarms as well. This simple process will not only keep you on time but can save the lives of you and your family. The Department is encouraging all residents to adopt this simple, lifesaving habit of changing the batteries in their smoke alarms.

Although smoke alarms are present in 95% of American homes, 20% do not work due to worn or missing batteries – this means nearly 19 million homes are at risk. The peak time for home fire fatalities is between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. when most families are sleeping. A working smoke alarm can often provide critical extra seconds people need to get out safely.

Fayette County Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Chief David Scarbrough states, "Changing your batteries when you change your clock is a simple and inexpensive way to keep your family and home safe."

The [U.S. Fire Administration](#) reports that fires kill more than 4,000 Americans each year and approximately injure 20,000 more. U.S. fire departments respond to nearly 2 million fires each year, with three-quarters of them occurring in residences.

A home is often referred to as a safe haven. This month, make sure your home is protected from (and your family is prepared for) a fire.

Here are 10 simple tips to help you avoid fires and reduce the risk of injury should one occur:

- 1) **Smoke Alarms** – These are still a very important addition to your home. Smoke alarms are widely available and inexpensive. Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home and test it monthly. If you already have smoke alarms, remember that they should be replaced within the specified lifetime of the product, usually no more than 10 years. To determine the age of your smoke alarm, look at the back where you will find the date of manufacture.
- 2) **Prevent Electrical Fires** – Don't overload circuits or extension cords. Cords and wires should never be placed under rugs or in high traffic areas. Avoid loose electrical connections by checking the fit of the plug in the wall outlet. If the plug loosely fits, inspect the outlet right away. A poor connection between the plug and the outlet can cause overheating and can start a fire in minutes.
- 3) **Keep Plugs Safe** – Unplug all appliances when not in use. Follow the manufacturer's safety precautions and use your senses to spot any potential disasters. If a plug is overheating, smells strange, shorts out or sparks – the appliance should be shut off immediately, then replaced or repaired.
- 4) **Alternative Heaters** – Make sure there is ample space around any portable heating unit. Anything that could catch fire should be at least three feet away. Inspect your chimney annually and use fire screens to help keep any fires in the fireplace.
- 5) **Fire Safety Sprinklers** – When combined with working smoke alarms, home fire sprinklers greatly increase your chance of surviving a fire. Sprinklers are affordable and they can increase property value and lower insurance rates.
- 6) **Create An Escape Route** – Create and practice your escape plan with your family from every room in the house. Practice staying low to the floor and checking for hot doors using the back of your hand. It's just like a routine school fire drill – but in your home.
- 7) **Position Appliances Carefully** – Try to keep TV sets, kitchen and other appliances away from windows with curtains. If there is a wiring problem, curtains can spread a fire quickly. Additionally, keeping your appliances away from water sources (like rain coming in from windows) can help prevent wiring damage which can lead to a fire.
- 8) **Clean Dryer Vents** – Clothes dryers often start fires in residential areas. Clean the lint filter every time you start a load of clothes to dry or after the drying cycle is complete. Make sure your exhaust duct is made of metal tubing and not plastic or foil. Clean the exhaust duct with a good quality dryer vent brush to prevent blockage & check for lint build up behind the dryer at least twice a year.
- 9) **Be Careful Around the Holidays** – If you fill your home with lights during the holiday season, keep them away from anything that can easily catch fire. Check all of your lights prior to stringing them up and dispose of anything with frayed or exposed wires.

10) **Conduct Regular Inspections** – Check all of your electronic equipment and wiring at least once a month. Taking a little time to do this each month can really pay off.

